

What is Anaplasmosis?

Anaplasmosis is an infectious disease that is caused by the bacteria *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* or *Anaplasma platys* that attack the white blood cells. Anaplasma was formerly known as *Ehrlichia*, so you may hear this disease referred to as Ehrlichiosis. Both dogs and cats can be infected.

How does an animal get infected with Anaplasma?

Deer ticks carry this bacteria transmitting it to the host while feeding. It is thought that the tick must feed for 24 hours or more to transmit the infection. Deer ticks can carry other parasites, including the bacteria that cause Lyme disease and canine Ehrlichiosis. Pets can have multiple infections.

What are the signs of Anaplasmosis?

Many pets have asymptomatic infections. Symptoms of anaplasmosis develop suddenly. The most common signs of infection are high fever, lethargy, and swollen painful joints (this can be dramatic). Pets will not eat well or at all and will be reluctant to move.

Other signs of infection include vomiting, diarrhea, and neurologic signs. Some pets may develop liver and kidney damage as a result of the infection. Some pets may develop bleeding disorders that show up as nosebleeds, bloody urine, or severe

How is Anaplasmosis diagnosed?

The *4Dx blood test* screens for Anaplasmosis, Lyme disease, canine Ehrlichiosis as well as for heartworm disease.

In patients with symptoms a Complete Blood Count (CBC) and chemistry profile are done. The CBC evaluates the cells that circulate in the bloodstream. Most patients with Anaplasmosis will have abnormal cell counts. The white blood cell (WBC), the red blood count (RBC) and the platelet count are often low. Platelets are required for blood to clot properly and if the count gets too low spontaneous bleeding may occur.

The chemistry profile looks at the internal organ function. It is very important to evaluate the internal organs to make sure there is no internal organ involvement.

All pets with clinical disease are screened for several other infectious organisms that may have also been transmitted and for which there are no in office tests.

How is Anaplasmosis treated?

Doxycycline is an antibiotic that we use to treat Anaplasma. This is given once or twice daily, depending on the situation, for 4 weeks. Sometimes we will need to treat for a longer period of time especially if there are other infections involved. It is common to find that dogs with anaplasmosis are co-infected with the Lyme bacteria.

In severe cases, hospitalization for advanced care is often required.

What is the prognosis?

With proper treatment the prognosis is good. Most pets respond within 1-4 days and will make a complete recovery over a period of weeks.

Can anything be done to prevent it?

Good tick control is vital. Monthly application of tick control medications is currently the best way to control ticks. The ticks that transmit these diseases are active whenever the temperatures are above freezing even in the winter so year round prevention is required. Because pets don't appear to develop a strong immunity to anaplasma following infection, it is possible to them to become reinfected following recovery.

Can I get Anaplasmosis from my pet?

No, you cannot get the infection directly from your pet. Humans acquire Anaplasmosis the same way our pets do, by tick bite. If your pet is infected then Anaplasma is in your area, so be very aware of ticks on you and your family. Anaplasmosis and the other tick borne diseases are present in the entire Capital District area.